

Northern New Mexican pueblo preserves cultural history through collaborative tours with Los Alamos National Laboratory

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Students gain new insights into their ancestry

LOS ALAMOS, N.M., Aug. 24, 2015—San Ildefonso Pueblo's Summer Education Enhancement Program brought together academic and cultural learning in the form of a recent tour of Cave Kiva Trail in Mortandad Canyon. "Opening up this archaeological site and sharing it with the descendants of its first inhabitants is a privilege," said LeAnn Purtzer, archaeologist with the Environmental Stewardship Services Group at Los Alamos National Laboratory. "Through these collaborative efforts, we are

protecting the untold parts of history, providing opportunities to connect with cultural heritage and assisting in educational growth.”In past years, the pueblo’s summer program for students has been primarily centered on cultural traditions and teaching the younger generations practices that have been passed down. However, this year the program changed gears and is working to bring the youth academic enrichment through emphasis on science, math and language arts in addition to honoring tradition. Through the program, which offers Tewa classes in the morning and opportunities such as the Cave Kiva Tour, the importance of history and cultural connectivity is still incorporated into the curriculum. The Summer Education Enhancement Program has also provided the youth with visits to Bandelier National Monument and Bradbury Science Museum’s archaeological exhibits to promote the connection of science and culture. “It is good for the students and for our cultural preservation to be able to show them where their ancestors came from, and how close it is to where we are today,” said Cultural Resources Advisor at San Ildefonso Pueblo, Bryan Montoya. “Collaborating with the Laboratory’s archaeologists to provide our students with these opportunities gives them a hands-on experience with their past, as well as a meaningful academic experience.”

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